

Michael F. Easley
Governor



State of North Carolina Office of the Governor

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GOV. EASLEY ANNOUNCES \$300,000 GRANT FOR HEALTH CARE INITIATIVE, HELPING 18 SCHOOLS IN ALLEGHANY, ASHE AND WATAUGA COUNTIES

RALEIGH – Gov. Mike Easley today announced a \$300,000 grant to launch a primary and preventive health care program serving students and staff in 18 schools in Alleghany, Ashe and Watauga counties.

The Appalachian School Health Initiative will provide more effective chronic disease management for school-age children, increase access to basic health care services and seek long-term decreases in preventable diseases.

“We will increase primary health care and wellness activities, and focus strongly on preventative measures,” said Easley, who recommended the funding. “These up-front investments can lead to healthier people and reduced health-care costs. It’s a win-win.”

The Appalachian Regional Commission will provide the grant assistance to the Appalachian District Health Department for program implementation. The health department will expand available school health resources to target pre-kindergarten children, second graders, exceptional children, sixth graders, high school seniors and school staff. The demonstration effort will span portions of two school years and serve more than 4,500 individuals from the 15 elementary schools and three high schools.

“More than 10 percent of North Carolina’s children suffer from asthma and they are prone to miss twice as many days as their classmates,” Easley said of one illness area where the initiative will focus. “If we can help these children with preventative and ongoing health care, we can reduce the number of hospital admissions and visits, prescription drug purchases and missed school days. That means healthier and happier students and lower overall medical costs.”

Students and staff will be screened in areas such as vision and hearing, along with various medical conditions including allergies, diabetes, asthma and other respiratory impairment, infectious diseases, and ear, nose and throat problems. Conditions identified by the screening will be referred to treatment programs and providers. Counseling and disease case management also are part of the program.

The Appalachian Regional Commission, a federal-state partnership, provides grants to enhance the economic development potential of more than 400 counties in 13 states. In North Carolina, 29 counties potentially are eligible for assistance in areas that implement the state’s and the ARC’s development plans. The school health program is one of 14 new projects proposed for North Carolina’s portion of the region this year.

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